(b) The rules governing the appointment of Rail Travellers' Service Agents have been notified in the Gazette of India Extra-Ordinary No. 579 dated 5-12-1985.

Revenue and Maintenance Cost of Shatabdi Express

583. SHRI M. A. BABY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state what is the maintenance cost and revenue from Shatabdi Express per day?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : Train-wise statistics of maintenance cost and earnings are not maintained by the Railways.

National Highway in Kerala

584. SHRI M. A. BABY : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the conventional declaration at the time of National Road Congress of converting a road as National Highway was implemented in the case of Kerala;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : (a) There is no such convention to declare a National Highway at the time of holding the session of Indian Roads Congress.

(b) and (c) Do not arise

Opening of new passport office in Kerala

585. SHRI M. A. BABY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new regional passport office is proposed to be opened in Kerala considering the workload and the delay in issuance of passports from the Cochin Regional Passport Office; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PROF. K. K. TIWARI): (a) and (b) The workload in most Passport Offices in India has increased during 1988. There is no major delay in issuance of passports from the Cochin Regional Passport Office. In order to ensure issue of passports with efficiency and consistent with security requirements, the working of the Passport Offices including Cochin, is kept under constant review. There is no decision to open a new Regional Passport Office in Kerala.

Cancellation of Flights of Gulf countries from Trivandrum and Bombay

586. SHRI M. A. BABY. Will the Minister CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of flights cancelled to Gulf countries from Trivandrum and Bombay during the last two months and the passengers dislocation due to it: and

(b) the alternate arrangements made available for the stranded passengers and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Forty two flights to Gulf countries were cancelled from Trivandrum and Bombay during the last two months.

(b) The passengers of the cancelled flights to the Gulf Countries from Trivandrum were accommodated in local hotels and sent from Trivandrum on other flights via alternative routes to their destinations.

National Scholarship

587. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to enhance the rate of National

Scholarship presently being given to the college students in different States and Union Territories;

(b) if so, what are the details of the increase proposed by different State Governments to the Centre; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to implement the proposals of the State Governments ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) No, Sir. The Government neither have a proposal nor have received any proposal from the State Governments/Union Territories to enhance the rate of National Scholarship being given to the college students in different States and Union Territories.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Converting minor ports into Major Ports

588. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convert some minor ports into major ports;

(b) if so, whether Gopalpur minor port is one of them; and

(c) what are the details of other minor ports proposed to be converted into major port during the Seventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to convert any minor port to a major port during the 7th Five Year Plan.

Amount alloted to different States under operation blackboard

589. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what amount has been allocated to different States for implementing of operation blackboard scheme in 1988-89; and

(b) what are the details of different works undertaken in Orissa under operation blackboard scheme in 1987-88 and 1988-89?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) Funds released so far during 1988-89 in respect of the scheme of Operation Blackboard are as follows:

S. No.	Name of State	Amount in lakhs
1.	West Bengal	384.34
2.	Tamil Nadu	249.47
3.	Bihar	738.18*
4.	Karnataka	126.87*
		1498.86

*Funds released for continuing salary of teachers appointed during 1987-88 under the scheme.

(b) the release of grants to States depends on preparation of projects and proposals by the State Government. During 1987-88, an amount of Rs. 753.00 lakhs was released to Orissa for implementing the scheme in 7377 schools in 65 blocks and 15 municipal areas. The amount released included the salary for 2978 additional teachers and the cost of essential teaching learning equipment to the schools. Quarterly Progress Reports detailing the progress of implementation are awaited from the State Governments.

Foreign tour of President of India

590. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the countries visited by the President of India in recent weeks;

(b) whether any bilateral agreements were entered into between India and those countries on the occasion of the President's visit; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?